



الجامعة العربية المفتوحة
Arab Open University
Kuwait الكويت

Faculty of Business Studies

Student Handbook

May 2017

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Note

Please note that information in this handbook is subject to change and continuous updating. Please check for updates at our website:

<http://www.aou.edu.kw>

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1. Foreword

The Faculty of Business Studies at the Arab Open University in Kuwait welcomes you to a unique learning experience that combines traditional learning with distance education. In this faculty, you will learn how to apply knowledge into practice through a blended learning method that aims to broaden your knowledge horizons.

As a student at AOU, you will find this handbook very useful. It is designed to provide you with all the information you will need to ensure a smooth transition during your tenure at AOU. It provides you with an introduction to the programme and its various tracks, as well as gives you an insight into the course requirements, examination policies, assessment systems and other relevant information to ensure a smooth transition during your tenure at AOU.

Your FBS tutors and staff at your local branch will be your main link with the University, so feel free to contact them when necessary. In addition to this handbook, please also refer to the companion “Student Guide, for Undergraduate Programmes, 2017-18” published by the Arab Open University, which provides information on overall university regulations and policies.

AOU is a partner of the Open University – UK, and thus many of our rules and regulations are derived or based on the OU UK system. You are therefore strongly advised to also refer to the “Student’s guide to studying in a programme validated by the Open University”, which is available on the AOU website.

As always, we at FBS are open to your suggestions and comments. If you have any comments that can improve the experience for students at AOU, we would appreciate hearing from you.

2. Welcome and introduction

By Prof. Saeed Al Hallaq, Dean.

I am pleased to welcome you to the Faculty of Business Studies at the Arab Open University in Kuwait. Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey to explore how businesses work. At FBS, we are committed to providing you with high quality education that enables you to effectively compete in local, regional and global labour markets. With us, you can gain access to top-of-the-line degrees in Management, Marketing, Accounting, Economics and Systems. Graduates of our University shall receive two certificates: an AOU degree accredited by the local Higher Education Authority and an OU validated award by the Open University in UK. This therefore, provides you with a competitive edge thus increasing your employment chances in the market.

This handbook outlines the general rules, regulations, policies and procedures that govern student life at the University. It also provides the framework in which organized student life operates, including the information they need to fully realize the University's resources and facilities.

Thank you for your interest in FBS and I hope your year ahead is both challenging and rewarding. My best wishes to you as you embark on your journey at the Arab Open University.

3. Academic Calendar

The branch registration calendar is an essential piece of information for students. It contains all the information pertaining to admission and registration, including/ lists registration dates for new and continuing students, instalment periods, and deadlines for add and drop period, as well as the dates of the start of classes, final exam days and results announcements, etc. It is designed in accordance with the unified academic calendar of AOU, for each future term of the academic year; which includes two main semesters – fall and spring – each consisting of 16 weeks, and an additional (optional) summer semester lasting 10 weeks. Students can successfully complete their study within an average period of *four* years. According to the bylaws, they should register for at least (8) or a maximum of (21) credit hours for the main semesters, which means the overall study period can be extended or compressed depending on the student's capabilities. That being said, students can shorten the four-year study time frame to 3.5 years when registering for the summer semesters, as well as may extend it up to 8 years maximum, in line with the university's regulations. For the optional summer semester nevertheless, students may only register for 12 credit hours. In general, the fall semester usually begins in September and ends in January, whereas the Spring Semester runs from February until June. The Summer Semester on the other hand, takes place between July and August.

As for the assessment calendar, students are provided with an exam schedule that contains specific information regarding exam days and dates for each module. In some cases, the start and end period of the exams may differ from those on the registration calendar deepening on the circumstances. The calendar is made available to students on both the website and LMS during each semester.

In addition to the generic calendars, each course comes with a modular calendar (course syllabus) which is accessible through LMS. The calendar corresponds to the academic calendar of AOU and serves as a guide for students on what topic is to be covered in each week of study.

A representative academic calendar is given in the link below:

<https://www.aou.edu.kw/students/Pages/academic-calendar.aspx>

4. List of Programme Coordinator and Academic Staff, Their Contact Details and Availability

The FBS programme employs tutors from a variety of fields to teach its five different specializations. They hold degrees from well-known universities across the globe so they can provide high quality education that meets the fluxes if the ever-changing business market. They are completely competent in open and blended learning methods, as well as in the subject matter taught. As a student at FBS, you will broaden your thinking horizons by having an insight into the operating processes of organizations through effective case studies. Our priority will always be to hire outstanding tutors to ensure high quality educational delivery. The BUS modules are delivered by twenty-four ambitious academic staff members (full time), as per the table below:

	TUTOR	EMAIL
1	Abdel Razaq Farah Ferihat	afreihat@aou.edu.kw
2	Sawsan malik	smalik@aou.edu.kw
3	Ahmed Alqattan	aalqatan@aou.edu.kw
4	Ahmad Abdelkader	a.abdelkader@aou.edu.kw
5	Aziz Yusuf	ayusuf@aou.edu.kw
6	Azzam Jassim Mohammad Alroomi	aalroomi@aou.edu.kw
7	Basil Mohammad Hussien Alzougool	balzougool@aou.edu.kw
8	Faisal Alqaoud	falqaoud@aou.edu.kw
9	Hanan almadani	halmadani@aou.edu.kw
10	Hani Mohamed Aziz Elzahar	hzahar@aou.edu.kw
11	Hassan Ahmed Hussein Sharaf Uddin	sharafha@aou.edu.kw
12	Hasan Aleassa	haleassa@aou.edu.kw
13	Hend Hassan	hend.sameh@aou.edu.kw
14	Hosam Abdelrasheed Sharfeldeen	habelrasheed@aou.edu.kw
15	Jarrah Fahad Al - Mansour	jarrah@aou.edu.kw
16	Khidir Hamid	kkhedir@aou.edu.kw
17	Mohammad Alloughani	m.alloughani@aou.edu.kw
18	Mohammad Fhaid Saad Saqer Alajmi	mohammad@aou.edu.kw
19	Nada saleh Almuzaini	nalmuzaini@aou.edu.kw
20	Rashed Alhaimar	ralmarri@aou.edu.kw
21	Salah Saleh Alhammadi	salhammadi@aou.edu.kw
22	Sherif Ismail	sismail@aou.edu.kw
23	Sumayya Banna	sumayya@aou.edu.kw
24	Nasser Alshawaf	nalshawaaf@aou.edu.kw

The academic staff at the FBS are available to you during the 25% face-to-face tutorial sessions and during the office hours. Each tutor is required to maintain two weekly office hours for each taught section. Tutors can also be reached through WhatsApp Business (new service) for advising and other enquiries. The contact details are available to students on the website, social media and banners across campus.

الارشاد الاكاديمي- برنامج إدارة الأعمال
Academic Advising - Business Department

Dr. Jarrah Al- Mansour 24394334	Dr. Hosam sharfeldeen 24394488
Dr. Hanan Almadani 24394276	Mr. Khidir Hamid 24394330
Dr. Ahmad Abdelkader 24394272	Dr. Mohammad Alloughani 24394423
Dr. Aziz Yusuf 24394482	Mr. Mohammad Alajmi 24394325
Dr. Azzam Alroomi 24394439	Ms. Nada Almuzaini 24394269
Dr. Falsal Alqaoud 24394408	Dr. Salah Alhammadl 24394329
Dr. Hani Elzahr 24394487	Dr. Sherif Ismail 24394486
Dr. Hassan Sharafuddin 24394323	Dr. Sumayya Banna 24394302
Dr. Hend Hassan 24394404	Dr. Abdelrazaq Frelhat 24394292
Dr. Ahmad Alqatan 24394327	Dr. Bassam Buhuseyn 24394485
Dr. Hasan Aleassa 24394484	Dr. Rashed Alhaimar 24394339

التواصل مع الارشاد الاكاديمي من الساعة 8 صباحا حتى 3 مساء عن طريق الواتساب فقط.
You may contact departments from 8am to 3 pm using **whatsapp** only.

 AOU_KW
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Arab Open University
  AOUKWBRANCH
  24394400

5. List of Support Staff (Technical and Administrative)

Support staff at the branches are ready to support you in your studies. Their email contact details are given in the table below:

#	Name	Email ID
1	Ms. Fatma Ali – BUS Admin Coordinator	fali@aou.edu.kw
2	Aamir Ahmed – LMS	aahmad@aou.edu.kw
3	Basharat Riaz – AV Tech Support	briaz@aou.edu.kw
4	Asif Ali – Tech Support	aishaq@aou.edu.kw
5	Fahad Baig – Tech Support	fbaig@aou.edu.kw
6	Qasim Mubeen – Tech Support	qasim@aou.edu.kw
7	Kaleem Ahmad – Tech Support	kaleem@aou.edu.kw
8	Rahamathulla – Web Developer	rahamathulla@aou.edu.kw
9	Zain Javed – Tech Support	zain@aou.edu.kw
10	Muhammad Adnan – SIS Admin	madnan@aou.edu.kw

6. Details of External Examiners

The AOU assessment strategy is based on general principles and procedures designed to organize and monitor the examinations at AOU. Among AOU regulations are validation (pre-assessment moderation) of exam questions and answer keys by external examiners (EE), audit of tutor marking, post-assessment moderation, and a four-level examination committees.

Summary of External Examiners

Track	EE Name	Institution
Marketing	Mr. Jaseem Ahmad (CEE)	Middlesex University
Accounting	Prof. Mahbub Zaman	Hull University
Management	Prof. Nicholas O'Regan	Aston Business School
Economics	Dr. Rachel Male	Queen Mary University of London
Systems	Dr. David Higgins	Liverpool University

7. Introduction to the programme

The Faculty of Business Studies at AOU follows an unconventional approach, applies creativity and looks at the business world from a unique perspective. Founded in 2002, it is the Arab world's leading blended-learning business school, offering a wide range of business paths, from single modules through to Bachelor's degree. The FBS programme was first validated in December 2003, and continues to undergo periodic revalidation (every 5 years) to maintain its currency.

The Objectives of FBS are to:

- Provide students with the knowledge to succeed in their chosen field and ensure the development of skills in problem solving, ethical decision making, communications, teamwork, and leadership.
- Increase students' abilities and confidence to handle managerial, financial and administrative activities.
- Enable students understand how key forces like the economy, the state and the system influence and interact with business.

- Teach students how to apply the most recent and innovative developments in systems thinking to areas such as information systems, organizational change and professional practice.
- Acquire and provide knowledge about the different approaches to the analysis and explanation of business problems; how to set targets and plan how to achieve them.
- Attract, and retain faculty dedicated to education, scholarship and the mission of the FBS.
- Attract and develop outstanding students who are dedicated to intellectual excellence.
- Produce primarily basic research, with supporting efforts in applied and pedagogical research that contributes to and complements the mission the AOU.
- Develop the skills of independent learning through activities of face to face and distance learning.
- Provide opportunities for continued involvement, education, and professional growth of its graduates.

7.1 Minimum number of credits required for an undergraduate study

In order for a student to receive the Business degrees he/she must successfully complete a minimum of 132 credit hours, of which 96 credit hours (360 Credit Points, Pts) are for OU requirements while 36 credit hours are to meet local accreditation requirements. The following table includes AOU courses for freshmen students to be taken in the first year (Category 1). (Category 2) includes the further AOU courses to be taken as faculty requirements and electives. In addition, (Category 3) includes OU UK 360 Pts requirements for levels 4, 5 and 6. The majority of modules in the core Business programme requirement (Category 3) are modules fully-sourced from the OU UK and validated for delivery in the AOU environment.

Distribution of 132 credit hours

No	Category	Credit Hours
1	University Requirements: Mandatory & Electives	24 (18 & 6)
2	Faculty Requirements common & Electives	12 (4 & 8)
3	Common Core Modules (Faculty & Track)	96 (48 & 48)
Total		132

7.2 FBS programme structure (96 credits hours/ 360 points)

Level	Modules	Programme/track structure – Level 4 (level 1)					Pts
		Management	Marketing	Accounting	Economics	Systems	
4	Common modules	BUS110 (30Pts): Introduction to Business LB170 (30Pts): Professional Communication Skills for Business Studies BUS101 (15Pts): Introduction to Math for Business BUS102 (15Pts): Introduction to Statistics					90
	Track modules	B123 (30Pts): Management Practice	B122 (30Pts): An Introduction to Retail Management and Marketing	B124 (30Pts): Fundamentals Of Accounting	ECO101 (15Pts): Principle of Microeconomics ECO102 (15Pts): Principle of Macroeconomic	B123 (30Pts): Management Practice	30
Students may exit with a Certificate of Higher Education (HE) in Business Studies at the end of this stage. Thus, for a Certificate of Higher Education in Business Studies, student will be required to have successfully obtained 120 credits at Level 4.						120	

Level	Modules	Programme/track structure – Level 5 (level 2)					Pts
		Management	Marketing	Accounting	Economics	Systems	
4	Common modules	B207A (30Pts): Shaping business opportunities B207B (30Pts): Shaping business opportunities					60
	Track modules	B205A (30Pts): Exploring innovation and entrepreneurship B205B (30Pts): Exploring innovation and entrepreneurship	B205A (30Pts): Exploring innovation and entrepreneurship B205B (30Pts): Exploring innovation and entrepreneurship	B291 (30Pts): Financial Accounting: B292 (30Pts): Management Accounting:	DD209A (30Pts): Economics and Economic Change DD209B (30Pts): Economics and Economic Change	SYS280 (30Pts): Principles and Practice of Systems' Thinking SYS210 (30Pts): Managing Technology and Innovation	60
	Students may exit with a Diploma of Higher Education in Business Studies at the end of this stage. Thus, for a Diploma of Higher Education in Business Studies, student will be required to have successfully obtained 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5.						120

Level	Modules	Programme/track structure – Level 6 (level 3)					Pts
		Management	Marketing	Accounting	Economics	Systems	
4	Common modules	BUS310 (30Pts): Strategic Management					30
	Track modules	B325 (30Pts): Managing across organisational and cultural boundaries: B628 (30Pts): Managing 1: organisations and people: B629 (30Pts): Managing 2: marketing and finance	B324 (30Pts): Marketing and society B327 (30Pts): Sustainable enterprise and innovation MKT331 (15Pts): Digital Marketing MKT332 (15Pts): Service Marketing	B326 (30Pts): Advanced Financial Accounting: B392 (30Pts): Advanced management accounting ACC300 (15Pts): Accounting Information System ACC302 (15Pts): Auditing theory and Practice	DD309A (30Pts): Doing economics: people, markets and policy DD309B (30Pts): Doing economics: people, markets and policy ECO340 (15Pts): Managerial Economics ECO341 (15Pts): Economic Development	SYS380 (30Pts): Managing Systems Complexity B325 (30Pts): Managing across organisational and cultural boundaries B327 (30Pts): Sustainable enterprise and innovation	90
							120
Total Pts/per	360	360	360	360	360	360	360

At the beginning of each semester, students receive a learning package which is designed and prepared especially for active and independent study; the package contains:

- 1) the core reading/study materials,
- 2) a number of other items that vary slightly depending on the particular business module requirements, such as further reading material in the form of set books, supporting notes, audio-visual aids in the form of audio cassettes, video tapes, and CD-ROMs,
- 3) a module calendar that serves as a guide to the progression of study of module material and content, and
- 4) copies of Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs).

7.3 Teaching and Learning system

AOU's hybrid system of learning combines between face to face meetings and distance learning to give students a more immersive learning experience. It encourages self-directed learning by allocating 75% to distance learning, in the form of virtual classes, quizzes and interactive multimedia resources on central LMS - PowerPoint slides, lectures note, activities, and other e-resources; and the remaining 25% delivered physically. According to the local regulations of MoHE, the face instruction for the 8 CHs modules takes place once a week for 2 hours, while the 4 and 3 CHs modules are based on a two-hour biweekly session. These sessions are supported by one office hour for every 2 taught hours. More details about Learning and Teaching Model at AOU is available in the following link:

<https://www.aou.edu.kw/media/PublishingImages/Lists/Announcements/AllItems/Teaching%20and%20Learning%20Model.pdf>

7.4 Learning during the challenging coronavirus

The unprecedented coronavirus has disrupted the operational activities of many organizations worldwide, including the educational sector. The implications on AOU were however, less drastic. The reason for this is that it already functions on the concept of blended learning which made transferring to online studies easy and smooth. Classes were conducted online using virtual classes, and students were provided with recorded lectures (on MS Teams and website) and supporting electronic materials on LMS. This created the urge to use an effective, real time, video conferencing platform to support distance learning and teaching. The branch started with 'BigBlueButton' web conferencing system, and then shifted to MS Teams. These virtual meetings allow for live engagement and collaboration between tutors and their pupils through interactive tools. It also supports virtual office hours, sharing of slides, audio and video, etc., making distance learning experience more fun.

Moreover, after finishing a live stream, the tutorials are saved on LMS for future use. To acquaint faculty staff members with the new software and its interactive tools, training workshops were arranged for the faculty every semester.

7.5 Partnership with the Open University in UK

The AOU is approved by The Open University in the UK as an appropriate organization to offer higher education programmes leading to Open-University validated awards. OU-validated awards have parity of esteem with similar awards offered throughout the UK higher education. A validated award is exactly the same as an OU direct award in terms of employment or application for postgraduate study. Under this partnership, the OU provides the following to the AOU:

- Programmes and courses.
- Learning materials (textbooks, CDs, DVDs, etc.).
- Programme monitoring, external examining.
- Dual awards (BA/BSC), exit awards (diplomas and certificates) together with the AOU.

7.6 Institutional Accreditation on a Local Level

In addition to the OU recognition of programmes, the AOU in Kuwait is also licensed from the Private Universities Council, a local accrediting body in Kuwait. This means that the threshold to standards for qualifications are mapped to the national qualifications framework of Kuwait, as well as to QAA benchmarks of UK; therefore, ensuring fair, reliable and timely information is disseminated to students. The maximum accreditation period for any university set by the PUC is five years. All private universities, including AOU in Kuwait, must work within the guidelines and stipulations of the ministry and follow local regulations. It is noteworthy that the university has undergone reaccreditation of its programmes in 2019, with a grant of five years ending in 2023. This therefore, is a proof that the branch adheres to the higher education quality standards, thus reflecting the university's high standing in the local educational market.

7.7 Attendance requirements

The Business programme, like other AOU programmes, is based on a blended learning model, comprising of a compulsory face-to-face meetings constituting 25% of student study hours and the balance 75% devoted to self-study that includes virtual classrooms, electronic materials, and assignments. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning by studying the module materials according to the schedule provided in the course calendar. Learning is facilitated through a University wide learning management system (LMS) based on the open source software Moodle.

7.8 Criteria for Admission

AOU, based on its belief in equal-opportunity education and the two interconnected principles of lifelong learning and education for all, tries to reach out to as many learners as possible making education available to those who may not have an opportunity otherwise. AOU's criteria for admission are among the most liberal in our region. The only requirement it has, for a student to apply and compete for a seat, is a high school certificate (or equivalent), a fundamental condition by the accrediting governmental agency in Kuwait. Beyond this, admission – pending the availability of seats on the basis of high-school grades – is open to people of all ages, gender, religious orientation, ethnic origins, etc.

To be admitted in any FBS programmes, the student should fulfil the following conditions:

- Obtain a general secondary school certificate or equivalent.
- Fulfil any other conditions determined by the University or competent authorities of the Branch country.

The following e-brochure will provide you with more information on our admission criteria:

<https://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Lists/Brochures/Attachments/1/Admission.pdf>

7.9 Language Placement Test

AOU administers Language Placement Tests in English, not as admission requirements but as indicators to help place students at the appropriate level of language development. Based on the test scores, students will be assigned courses, which aim to develop the students' proficiency in English in order to undertake the full course load in their respective areas of specialization.

7.10 Opportunities available to students on completion of the programme

Globalisation and the advancement of technology have forced employers, particularly in the private sector, to search for individuals qualified in problem solving and decision making. Therefore, there is an increased demand for Business Studies graduate students. Our students will graduate from the Business programme with a solid academic background, paving the way for career opportunities in different business areas, such as: accounting, marketing, and banking.

7.11 Opportunities and support for study abroad

By virtue of AOU's partnership with The Open University UK, graduates receive two degrees, one from the AOU and a validated degree from The OU UK. However, all academic work must be completed within one of the AOU branches. If you wish to transfer to another institution, check the regulations at the website about credit transfers.

8. Programme Specification

FBS offers a BA degree in business with the option to specialize in one of five specializations:

- 1- BA (Hons) Business Studies with Systems Practice
- 2- BA (Hons) Business Studies with Economics
- 3- BA (Hons) Business Studies with Accounting
- 4- BA (Hons) Business Studies with Marketing
- 5- BA (Hons) Business Studies with Management

While all the tracks share a common core requirement, track specific modules vary from one track to another. The related programme specification can be accessed through visiting the below page:

<https://www.aou.edu.kw/faculties/business/Pages/undergraduate-programs.aspx>

9. Module Specifications

AOU academic programmes are made up of modules (formerly called courses) made up of a variety of academic materials. Each module within a programme is designed to deliver content that achieves the desired learning outcomes and objectives consistent with the vision and mission of AOU. Module Specification documents for the five specializations (Management, Accounting, Marketing, Economics and Systems) are provided at the AOU website under course catalogue. Please visit the below link:

<https://www.aou.edu.kw/faculties/business/Pages/course-catalogue.aspx>

10. Student support and guidance and advice

FBS students at AOU are offered a wide range of student support services, which take academic and non-academic settings, as discussed below:

10.1 Academic support

10.1.1 Textbooks

The provision of study materials that include guides and audio-visual aids to support learning, in addition to e-books such as McGraw Hill that is accessible via LMS. It is important to note that most of BUS materials for specialization courses are OU-based.

10.1.2 University website

Access to the university website at www.aou.edu.kw, which embodies a lot of guidance and support materials such as: updated Course Guides (programme specification), Study Calendars, Brochures, as well as additional notes and information on courses.

10.1.3 Orientation arrangements

General and specialized orientation sessions are organized at the beginning of each semester to introduce new students to the learning system, study programme and the support systems (LMS, SIS and e-library). The different arrangements include:

a) Student orientation day: Student orientation is a formal welcome event instituted for incoming new students to make them familiar with the campus services. It usually takes place in the first week of the academic semester to educate students about the important aspects of the University. It takes the setting of an exhibition-like style where academic and administrative departments including the Student Council assemble in one area to provide valuable information, answer student questions and distribute information brochures to add to the information given verbally to students.

Through this day, students learn more about their chosen programme and its tracks, which facilitates initial track (specialization) selection. It is also a great opportunity for them to discover the different clubs available at the university, thus giving them the opportunity to join the club/s in which they are interested. In addition, the event is enriched with LMS and SIS presentations to guide students on the core systems of the blended learning paradigm.

In response to the pandemic situation, however, a live orientation was organized on the 3rd of December 2020, in order to guide new students on the online learning platform and give them space to ask questions. Kindly find the referenced link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXgtSiwGnGI>

To further assist students, the registration department organized an open discussion meeting for all students to answer questions related to admission and the electronic services. The event took place on December 15, 2020, as demonstrated in the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afNRuxRHYDY>

Orientation can also be achieved through:

1. Induction materials such as AOU Student Prospectus (available on the website) and program leaflets
2. Personal delivery of information through contacts with Admission and Registration and support staff during admission periods.
3. Induction program presentations (LMS and SIS).
4. Providing information about AOU during foundation courses such as credit course GR118, Life skills and coexistence, which addresses the requirements and skills of studying through open learning in general and AOU in particular.

b) Programme-specific orientation: This form of orientation takes place during the first two weeks of the semester (post-generic induction) for each faculty respectively. It is more condensed than the generic orientation, thus giving tutors more scope to provide valuable information and useful tips on the programme, learning approach, assessment, study plans and modules; in addition to addressing answer student enquires. Since it takes place in the auditorium, tutors can assist their presentation with slide shows to enrich the session. Moreover, the event schedule includes LMS and SIS sessions in collaboration with the IT technicians.

Additionally, students can receive programme specific induction through office visits during the semester, providing them with more space to clarify concerns.

c) Technical orientations

- (i) **LMS/SIS workshops:** As an extra and mandatory benefit, new students are also provided with **LMS** and **SIS** workshops at the beginning of each semester, which includes detailed demonstration of how to use both systems for registering courses, accessing e-files and exams, etc. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, however, the workshops were conducted virtually at the beginning of the spring semester 2020/2021, and consisted of two sessions. New students were informed by e-mail about the dates for both workshops. Students have also been sent instructions on how to use their designated email IDs to access MS Teams, where the workshop took place in February 2021. All of the workshops were video recorded to make them accessible to students who missed the orientation sessions, thus giving them the chance to acquaint the practical skills needed for using these core-learning systems, as well as to use it for the future semesters (see the links below):

LMS:

[LMS 1.mp4](#)

Email:

[البريد.mp4](#)

SIS:

[خطوات التسجيل-7.pdf](#) (registration steps)

[كشف درجات.mp4](#) (how to request a transcript)

[لمن يهمه الأمر.mp4](#) (how to request to whom it may concern letters)

[صورة طبق الأصل للجدول الدراسي.mp4](#) (how to request a copy of the course schedule)

Other services such as how to drop a course, transfer between programmes, request an equivalency and withdraw from the University are accessible via the main SIS page (before logging in). The link is referenced below for easy access to the page:

<https://sis.aou.edu.kw/onlineservices/>

- (ii) **E-library workshop:** In addition to the generalized information on the e-library features during the generic orientation, a training workshop on how to use the e-library and cite resources is organized for new students during the first two weeks of study.

Additionally, students can receive support throughout the semester from the lab assistants who are available from 8 am until 9 pm during the six-study days (Saturday-Thursday).

10.1.4 Tutorial meetings

A two-hour weekly (and bi-weekly) tutorials where students meet their tutors to cover the learning outcomes in a modern setting. A 25% class attendance is required as part of the University's policy to adopt a system of blended learning.

10.1.5 Personal tutoring (office hours)

A one-to-one support through office meetings where tutors maintain scheduled weekly office hours, which are intended to provide a more informal environment for academic support. Students are always given an opportunity to discuss, ask and answer questions during the office hours. Both full and part-time tutors are requested to hold two weekly office hours for each taught section.

10.1.6 LMS support

A virtual learning environment to support students remotely via teaching/learning material, supplementary materials, frequently asked questions and collaborative tools and technologies. Through LMS, students can access the course learning resources (including e-books) and supplementary materials such as quizzes, presentations, videos and recorded lectures, anytime and anywhere. It functions as a hub, housing forums, discussion rooms, interactive study materials, and all student orientated bylaws and other related announcements. It also acts as a bridge to the distinctive e-library resources for both students and tutors. In addition, students receive (and submit) their TMA assignments and tutor feedback on LMS. Thus, in addition to face-to-face contact there is distance support for those students who cannot regularly meet their tutors in their office hours due to employment or domestic responsibilities. The privacy of this channel allows students to discuss with their tutors some matters that they may be uncomfortable discussing publicly in the classroom.

10.1.7 Student Information System (SIS)

Through this system, students can register for courses, add/drop modules, change sections, view schedules and grades, etc.

10.1.8 Academic Advising

Academic advisors assist students with educational planning, course selection and other areas related to their educational performance. Each student is assigned an academic advisor who provides the necessary support, but students may also seek assistance from any advisor during their office hours. Special attention is however, given to lower performing students (GPA below 2.0 points) who are provided with intensive support to help them perform better on exams They are encouraged to visit their advisor to discuss ways for improving performance.

Also, these students can only register for courses through the advisor. Nevertheless, advising is not simply a one-day event, but rather a continuous process of support throughout the semester. Additionally, an advising plan is available at the university's website to help all students select courses efficiently. For the advising plan, please click on the below link:

<https://www.aou.edu.kw/faculties/business/Pages/Studies-Plan.aspx>

Student can reach advisors either in person, through LMS, or by email (advising.bus@aou.edu.kw). In addition to that, a new approach to advising has recently been embraced by the University following the coronavirus outbreak through the use of **WhatsApp Business** service. Through this quick channel, students can easily connect with their tutors for advising and other enquiries. The below picture includes the contact numbers of the BUS advisors:

الارشاد الاكاديمي - برنامج إدارة الأعمال
Academic Advising - Business Department

Dr. Jarrah Al- Mansour 24394334	Dr. Hosam sharfeldeen 24394488
Dr. Hanan Almadani 24394276	Mr. Khidir Hamid 24394330
Dr. Ahmad Abdelkader 24394272	Dr. Mohammad Alloughani 24394423
Dr. Aziz Yusuf 24394482	Mr. Mohammad Alajmi 24394325
Dr. Azzam Alroomi 24394439	Ms. Nada Almuzaini 24394269
Dr. Faisal Alqaoud 24394408	Dr. Salah Alhammadl 24394329
Dr. Hani Elzahar 24394487	Dr. Sherif Ismail 24394486
Dr. Hassan Sharafuddin 24394323	Dr. Sumayya Banna 24394302
Dr. Hend Hassan 24394404	Dr. Abdelrazaq Freihat 24394292
Dr. Ahmad Alqatan 24394327	Dr. Bassam Buhuseyn 24394485
Dr. Hasan Aleassa 24394484	Dr. Rashed Alhaimar 24394339

التواصل مع الارشاد الاكاديمي من الساعة 8 صباحا حتى 3 مساء عن طريق الواتساب فقط.

You may contact departments from 8am to 3 pm using **whatsapp** only.

AOU_KW

AOU_KW

الجامعة العربية المفتوحة
Arab Open University

AOUKWTRANCH

24394400

It is also worth noting that during the lockdown due to coronavirus, students were offered virtual office hours (via the video conferencing platform) to supplement the virtual classes.

10.1.9 IT support

As part of their role as technical support, the IT technicians are dedicated to organizing workshops periodically (beginning of each semester) to provide the necessary training for faculty and students on the university's core systems (LMS&SIS). To ensure speedy response, the technicians are easily approached through email (lms1@aou.edu.kw) and direct interaction on campus. In addition, two labs have also been allocated solely for meeting technical demands such as how to upload TMA, view schedule, pay fees, etc.

For the list of IT support staff and their email IDs, please refer to [section \(5\)](#).

10.1.10 Guide to Virtual Learning Environment (electronic guides)

The University offers students a blend of electronic guides to support and enhance their learning experience at AOU. It relies on the website, social media and LMS as a hub for posting announcements and manuals, related bylaws and other services it provides. Learning is supported by recorded lectures, interactive exercises, e-library and e-books (for most of the courses). To further assist students during the recent coronavirus outbreak, the University had conducted virtual orientations and technical workshops (see orientation section), as well as designed a step-by-step electronic guides for new and continuing students on how to register courses through SIS (see below). Students were also assigned accounts on MS Teams for accessing the virtual classes, in addition to having weekly virtual office hours. Moreover, new students receive an email with a username, a password and a video demo on how to use the LMS once it has been activated. Further, students interested in learning more about the university and its services can browse the short demos available on SIS and LMS, as well as the **brochures** and leaflets available on campus and online (website). On the website are also important guides such as the recorded lectures, student prospectus, and advising plan, etc.

The related links include:

- Brochures:

<https://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/brochures.aspx>

- AOU student prospectus:

<https://www.arabou.edu.kw/university/Documents/Regulations/student/en/Student%20Prospectus%202020-2021.pdf>

- OU guide:

<https://www.arabou.edu.kw/partnerships/ou/Documents/OU-Students-Guide-2020-2021.pdf>

Step-by-step guides (for new students it is sent by email whereas for continuing students it is available on the website and SIS. **Please copy the below link to your internet browser:**

[file:///C:/Users/satieh/Downloads/%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%84-7%20\(6\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/satieh/Downloads/%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%84-7%20(6).pdf)



4.3 Registration
process for continui

LMS video demo

https://arabou-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/support_tsm_aou_edu_kw/EZsYsiWv9ORDv2lqVo7pfL0BP6E_tS3sGsQ7hodhopPF5w?e=7Z8N42

10.1.11 E-services

The newly implemented measures since COVID-19 outbreak included:

1. Submission of admission related documents for new students is now online.
2. Students can apply online to obtain signed copies of all types of certificates and statements such as degree certificates – local and OU, mural certificates, ‘To Whom it may concern certificates’, grade transcripts, academic schedules and course description statements, etc., through SIS. The letters will be delivered to the student residence accordingly within two weeks.
3. Payment of graduation related fees. Student guidance to the steps for completing graduation related transactions is accessible via the website at <http://www.aou.edu.kw/students/Pages/Graduate-Students-Transaction.aspx>.
4. Requesting instalment fee.
5. Submitting temporary suspension and withdrawal requests.
6. Submitting requests for equivalencies.
7. Switching between tracks (Business Studies Faculty) and/or changing the major (specialization). This process begins with students submitting a request for transfer on SIS, which should be approved by the academic advisor in order to process the request by the Admission and Registration Department.

10.1.12 Student communication channels

In order to facilitate rapid communication between students and tutor/key departments, each registered student has been assigned an email account that is owned by the university. Students can access their emails through Office 365, the University website – which offers a link to outlook – or through their smart phones. In addition to tutor/department interaction, the email is also used to access MS Teams for attending virtual classes. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, however, a new channel ‘WhatsApp Business service’ has been launched to provide students with a uniform and efficient communication channel. The contact numbers for faculty members can be found in this handbook, the social media and banners at the FBS Department. Additionally, the branch uses SMS texting for communicating important announcements in a timely manner.

10.1.13 Support for students with special needs

As part of its policy of equal opportunity education, AOU ensures that all students are fairly treated and that they are provided with adequate support to guide their academic life at the University. Therefore, students with special needs are given due attention to help them fulfil the intended learning outcomes of their study in a friendly educational and social environment. Among the services provided by the branch is a psychological counselling office within the unit of Student Affairs that aims to help all students, especially students with certain medical conditions, in adapting to the implemented learning approach. A psychologist (PhD holder) specializing in counseling and scheme therapy has been appointed to provide counselling and support to the concerned students on a mental and psychological level and to address academic, social and emotional concerns. To assist students who have mental or psychological challenges, a medical condition section has been added to the application form so that they can identify any medical conditions they may have (by selecting from a list of medical conditions). In case health issues are indicated, supporting documents are provided accordingly. This helps keep a track of all students with certain health or mental impairment.

The following steps are taken to ensure the counselling process is inclusive and successful:

1. All related applications are extracted and applicants are contacted and examined on a one-to-one basis. This involves two categories: physically challenged students and those with mental or psychological difficulties.
2. Each case is then filed and the involved parties are notified if special arrangements are necessary based on the medical condition such as front seat, extension of time, comfortable chair/table, larger font, etc. In addition to the provision for physically challenged students, mental and psychological issues are closely monitored by the counsellor to ensure their wellbeing during their study career.
3. In the case of the medication use and other mental instabilities, students are asked to sign a consent form. They are also asked to visit the office regularly for follow up.
4. For severe cases, students are referred to the higher management for required action.
5. Special training is provided to staff members about how to deal with certain medical situations. The office is also involved in designing a counseling program to provide support and guidance services to students, academic and admin members, in order to help them make better decisions and improve retention rates.

In addition to the above, students with certain disabilities are included in sort of activities (cultural, social, art and sport activities). Each semester, the Student Affairs Department organizes an honouring ceremony to honour the distinctive students. Additionally, students with special needs who feel that certain circumstances have impacted negatively on their performance when completing their assignments should submit proof of this to their tutor who will discuss the matter with the appropriate authority. All services provided to our students are confidential and are not disclosed to a third party without the student's written consent

Apart from the academic provisions, physically challenged students are also provided with logistical support through ramps and elevators. There are also special parking spots allocated for them.

10.1.14 Complaint and Appeals systems

Online access to complaints and appeals services through the Student Information System (SIS). The **appeal system** is designed to tackle students' appeals against final course grades and disciplinary decisions. Students can appeal a final grade within one-week post grade announcements, according to the timeline set by the Examination department. The **complaint system**, on the other hand, formalizes any concern related to academic or non-academic aspects. It is always accessible to students and involves a direct channel of communication between students and the related departments.

The systems are accessible at:

<https://sis.aou.edu.kw/online-services/Index.aspx>.

10.1.15 Library Support

The campus is staffed with skilled support librarians to provide students with the necessary assistance/instruction for using the library resources. A brief on the physical and electronic libraries is provided below:

a) Learning Resource Centre – Physical library

The physical library at the branch is a storehouse of valuable academic resources that contributes to the overall enhancement of the teaching and learning systems. It offers a quiet and attractive area for studying, reading and researching practices, through its new modernized landscape as in the academic year 2017/2018.

There are two libraries on campus – one for females and one for male students – that accommodates over 8500 books and 100 journals from different disciplines: commerce, literature and general studies. The library is open to students, staff and academicians during the normal study days from 8 am - 8pm, and on Saturdays from 9 am to 3 pm. The library also extends its services off campus through an efficient borrowing system.

The new library enhancements include the following (total area):

- i. New lightening and carpeting;
- ii. A five-shelf unit to hold a larger number of books;
- iii. New tables and chairs (about 112 seats) to provide more seating to faculty and students;
- iv. Lounge seating to allow for social interactions;
- v. **Twelve** desktop computers located throughout the library for student use;
- vi. More study carrels to accommodate more students;
- vii. **Eighteen** independent pallets for those who need a quiet area to concentrate (with two electrical sockets installed in each);
- viii. Collaborative ample writing spaces to allow for collaborative work;
- ix. Two 65-inch LCD screens mounted on a portable stand for workshops;
- x. New service desk, and
- xi. RFID security system

b) E-library

Both AOU students and staff are given access to e-library resources, which can be easily accessed through a special e-library portal via their LMS accounts, so they can do so from anywhere at any time. They are encouraged to use the e-library as extensively as possible, so as to effectively interface with AOU's blended learning model. FBS enforces the use of the e-library by requiring business students to provide good referencing in all its TMAs. Also, the University, in cooperation with KFAS, has set up a lab dedicated solely for e-library navigation. Technical support is provided through lab assistants devoted to helping students/tutors access and search through the different databases.

10.2 Non-academic Support

10.2.1 Support/Teaching/Management Staff

Access to support, teaching and management staff through email, social media, WhatsApp Business and in person.

For students enquires about registration, financial, technical, or other issues during or outside of registration, please contact the following email addresses:

- **Registration Office:** admission@aou.edu.kw
- **Technical Unit:** lms1@aou.edu.kw
- **Graduates Office:** Graduates@aou.edu.kw
- **Student Affairs:** malaska@aou.edu.kw
- **Financial Affairs:** finance@aou.edu.kw
- **Public Relations:** info@aou.edu.kw

Academic staff email IDs have been provided earlier in this report. Tutors may also be contacted through MS Teams, whereby each student has been assigned an MS Teams email account as of the academic year 2020/2021. To connect via Teams, you must change the domain name of the tutor's email ID (i.e. abc@tsm.aou.edu.kw). As for the technical and programme admin coordinator support staff, their email ID's were also included earlier in the report.

Additionally, the WhatsApp numbers and other related announcements are regularly published on the social media platforms (the related accounts are provided in the following section).

10.2.2 Social media support

The University has an active social media presence to address students concerns and provide them with relevant guidance. Students can learn more about the University and its services by following the designated social media accounts (see below), which is supervised by the Public Relations Department. The PR works closely with other departments, in order to collect relevant responses to students' questions. The related social media accounts are listed below:

- **Instagram:** aou_kw
- **Twitter:** @AOU_kwt
- **Facebook:** @aoukwtbranch
- **Youtube:** aou_kwt

In addition to the above, temporary campaigns were also launched to support and encourage students during the coronavirus period. Examples included:

- i. **#stay at home for Kuwait campaign:** This campaign aimed at encouraging students to stay at home through awareness videos created by AOU-KW instructors and volunteer students including students from the sports team at the branch.
- ii. **'We are all online' campaign:** This campaign was designed to encourage students morally by highlighting how online education allows them to meet study demands efficiently and effectively during the exceptional coronavirus outbreak. A number of students tagged videos in response to this campaign to motivate each other. There was also an active participation from representatives of students' clubs at the branch.

10.2.3 Club support

Students' different talents are embraced through special clubs supervised by the Students Affairs department and faculty members. These clubs are supported materially and intangibly by the university. Different clubs exist which houses students from the three different faculties at the Kuwait branch. It should be noted that the club membership is open to students from all faculties, and BUS students can also join any club established by other faculties. To increase awareness among new students, the club representative take part in the new student orientation held at the beginning of the semester to expose students to the club activities and collect memberships. Each club has a special page on the social media for related announcements.

10.2.4 Financial Advice and Support

Financial support is routed through the Student Affairs department who provides financial aid to needy students who meet special conditions. Announcements are published on the Branch University Website clarifying the procedures and deadlines for accepting applications, which are evaluated by the University's administration. Grants are normally paid before the end of the semester to qualified applicants. Financial assistance takes the form of instalments and/or grants through a special fund called "AOU student fund" for the purpose of financially supporting the students in need as well as honouring the distinguished students. Another option is also available which involves referring financially challenged students – or accepting applications – to charities to help them complete their undergraduate degree.

10.2.5 Training and Continuous Education Unit

The branch houses a special Training Centre and Continuous Education Unit dedicated for delivering professional training courses such as ICDL, CISCO, Photoshop, Advanced Excel, English teacher training program, and many more. Students are made aware of the offered training courses through special announcements on LMS, website and the display screens located at the main entrances. During this exceptional period, CEU is still commencing courses virtually at a reduced fee (through MS TEAMS) to ensure maximum benefit.

10.2.6 Career Advising

Access to career advising and networking opportunities with employers through job fairs organized by the Student Affairs Department. This event intends to connect students and alumni with potential employers for the purpose of promoting employment opportunities for full-time or part-time careers matching with ministry and company requirements. The general goal of the event is to assist students so that they make better career choices and can better identify their skills, competencies and values to excel in today's highly competitive global employment market. The Student Affairs Department, on its part, serves as a consultant for work-related concerns such as developing skills, career decision making, CV and cover letter writing, job interview skills and training and education. It also provides students with a list of potential employers in the form of links via LMS, as well as, make contacts with employers for potential vacancies for students and graduates.

As part of a good practice, the university hosted a virtual job fair on the 10th of August 2021 to provide students, especially graduates (and graduating) students, with employment opportunities in leading local companies.

10.2.7 ALUMINI

A comprehensive ALUMINI system has been launched as of the summer 2020/2021. This rich platform aims to provide in-depth data about graduates' qualifications and career status, thus helping the university make important decisions such as determining the credibility of the offered degrees in the market. At the same time, graduates are kept informed of important events and career opportunities hosted by the branch, in addition to being linked with their fellow grads. As part of a good practice, the university hosted a **virtual job fair** on the 10th of August 2021 to provide students, especially graduates (and graduating) students, with employment opportunities in leading local companies.

برنامج المعرض الوظيفي الافتراضي
Virtual Job Fair Schedule

A O U J O B F A I R			
10.00 - 10.05	Opening Ceremony	12.25 - 12.40	Zain
10.05 - 10.10	AOU Director	12.40 - 12.55	Dar Alshifa Hospital
10.10 - 10.20	AOU Human Resources	12.55 - 1.10	KDD
10.20 - 10.35	Kuwait Banking Association	1.10 - 1.25	New Mowasat Hospital
10.35 - 10.50	AlSayer	1.25 - 1.40	Tamdeen Group
10.50 - 11.05	Commercial Bank of Kuwait	1.40 - 1.55	Warba Bank
11.05 - 11.20	Tatayab		
11.20 - 11.35	Boubyan Bank		
11.35 - 11.50	Gulf Bank		
11.50 - 12.10	Prayer Break		
12.10 - 12.25	Kuwait Finance House		

عبر برنامج Zoom
يوم الثلاثاء
10/8/2021
من 10am الى 2pm

 AOU_KW
  AOU_KW
  الجامعة العربية المفتوحة
Arab Open University
  AOUKWTBRANCH
  24394400

المعرض الوظيفي الافتراضي
Virtual Job Fair

A O U J O B F A I R

 ZAIN
 TATAYAB
 تمدين
TAMDEEN
GROUP
 التجاري
Al-Tijari
 بنك بويان
Boubyan Bank
 السايير
AL-SAYER
 بنك وربة
WARBA BANK
 اتحاد مصارف الكويت
Kuwait Banking Association
 بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House
 KDD
 مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
 EPO
GULF
 مستشفى موفسات الجديدة
NEW MOWASAT HOSPITAL

عبر برنامج Zoom
يوم الثلاثاء
10/8/2021
من 10am الى 2pm



 AOU_KW
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  الجامعة العربية المفتوحة
Arab Open University
  AOUKWTBRANCH
  24394400

10.2.8 Student Support & Counselling

The University houses a psychological counselling office within the division of the Student Affairs Department to help students achieve social and psychological adaptation. This involves following up with the recommendations of the medical centers, as well as addressing academic, social and emotional concerns. A psychologist (PhD holder) specialized in counselling and scheme therapy has been appointed for this purpose. The office role is purely counselling, that is, providing students with one-to-one intensive support especially those with special needs. It is also involved in designing a counselling program to provide support and guidance services to students, academic and admin members, in order to help them make better decisions and improve retention rates.

10.2.9 Work placement information

The University provides valuable experience for working and non-working students to enrich their learning experience. Working university students are introduced to the theoretical foundation of work practice, while non-working students have the opportunity to gain practical experience by enrolling in the IN300 course.

11. Facilities and Services

Due to the fact that AOU system of education is primarily blended learning that involves integration with technology, it is only imperative that the IT systems be in place to facilitate this system of learning. In general, physical resources at AOU are in branch-based rather than programme-based. Classrooms, computer labs, computer equipment, software and application systems, car parking facilities and special needs facilities, all are used by all students in all programmes.

The below points are a brief overview of the campus infrastructural arrangements:

1. Housing 37 smart classrooms, 10 computer labs (including CISCO lab), 4 language labs, one multipurpose lab and an Artificial Intelligence Lab (AI). A number of these classrooms and labs are equipped with Interactive LED screens. Others however, are installed with an Interactive white board (smart board) measuring 75-90” inches. Common equipment includes a projector (including touch panel), wall mounted speakers, a microphone and a lecture recording system (fixed and portable cameras). All classroom and labs facilities are networked using high speed internet connections.
2. Allocating two computer labs dedicated for providing technical support to students such as how to upload TMA, view schedule etc.
3. Equipped with a physical library that offers a quiet and attractive area for studying, reading and researching practices, through its new modernized landscape as of the academic year 2017/2018. It accommodates over 8500 books and 100 journals from different disciplines: commerce, literature and general studies. The library also extends its services off campus through an efficient borrowing system. This process is controlled through the use of a bar coding technology that links the library resources to the koha integrated library system.
4. Embracing technology through its e-library subscription services that provides a gateway to hundreds of top rated journals and articles from famous databases. Students and tutors can easily access these materials through a special e-library portal via their LMS accounts.

Also, the Kuwait branch, in cooperation with KFAS, has set up a lab dedicated solely for e-library navigation. Technical support is provided through lab assistants devoted to helping students/tutors access and search through the different databases.

5. Hosting events, conferences and other extracurricular activities in two auditoriums – one main and one small.
6. Accommodating two student lounges (for male and female provisions) to provide space for resting, reading, studying and so on.
7. Offering two sport courts – multipurpose and football. The multipurpose can be used for hosting basketball, volley ball and tennis tournaments.
8. Supporting students outside the class through extensive packages of learning resources on LMS. These include course learning resources and supplementary materials such as quizzes, presentations, videos and recorded lectures, that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. The portal functions as a hub, housing forums, discussion rooms, interactive study materials, and all student orientated bylaws and other related announcements. It also acts as a bridge to the distinctive e-library resources for both students and tutors. In addition to that, it houses McGraw Hill e-books for some modules to provide students with smarter options in the rapid technological pace of the 21st century.
9. Constantly updating and upgrading both physical and electronic resources to support students, such as the e-library, Learning Management System (LMS), Student Information System (SIS), and so on. In addition, a wide range of supplementary material and video recordings are offered through LMS.
10. Logistical arrangements for students with special needs whereby physically challenged students can access the university's premises through ramps and elevators.

The physical resources available for disability support include:

- Special parking areas.
- Special restrooms.
- Elevators to facilitate their movement.
- Wheelchair ramps distributed in all areas of the campus to enable them to move around smoothly.
- Wheel chairs (at each entrance).
- Automatic doors.

11. Engaged with two cafeterias (Starbucks and Subway) and one canteen (Dukkan) who provide food and drinks services based on a predetermined contract that lays out strict conditions on health and quality, in compliance with the safety and health standards adopted by the Ministry of Health in Kuwait.

For more details on facilities and services, please refer to the website.

12. ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESSION REGULATIONS

12.1 Elements of assessment

Complete details on assessment and progression regulations can be found at the AOU website and are also distributed as part of each module package. The following discussion summarizes the salient features of the assessment process.

Assessment is based on two components and uses three types of instruments.

The two components are:

- **Continuous assessment:** This comprises the TMA (20%) and the MTA (30%) representing 50% of the overall assessment score.
- **Examination assessment:** This consists of one final exam at the end of the semester. This component represents 50% of the overall assessment score.

The three instruments are:

- Tutor-Marked-Assignments (TMA)
- Mid-Term Assessments (MTA)
- Final Exams

12.1.1 Timings of the assessment

The assessment dates are listed in the relevant academic calendar available on the website. Please visit the link below to view the academic calendar:

<https://www.aou.edu.kw/students/Pages/academic-calendar.aspx>

12.2 Minimum pass marks for modules

In order to pass the module, a student must obtain:

- (i) An average of at least 50% across the different components of assessment (i.e. Continuous Assessment and Final Assessment),
- (ii) A minimum average of 20/50 on the Final Assessment, that is at least 40% of the total grade on the final exam, and

- (iii) A minimum average of 15/50 on Continuous Assessment (TMA + MTA), which accounts for at least 30% of the total continuous assessment grade.

Grade D (1.5 points) is considered as the minimum passing grade for a student's successful completion of the module. In all these assessment components, students will be assessed according to criteria which are based on the learning outcomes.

12.3 Rules governing the Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)

In accordance with the examination and assessment bylaws, students must comply with the approved course calendar's deadlines for submitting each TMA. Students who do not submit their TMA's on its due date shall receive a 0 mark unless he/she presents a valid excuse to the bodies assigned by the University. If the excuse is accepted, the student may be given a grace period of 7 calendar day, i.e. this period includes the immediate weekend following the TMA submission deadline. The related bylaw is referenced below:

<https://www.arabou.edu.kw/university/Documents/Regulations/student/en/The%20Bachelor%20Award%20Examinations%20and%20Assessment%20Bylaws.pdf>

12.4 Process for requesting deferral of modules

As per the branch bylaws, students cannot defer modules but may drop the course or postpone the final exam according to the following conditions:

a) Add / Drop policies

With reference to Article 10 of the Bachelor Awards Requirements bylaws, the student may drop and add certain courses included in the study plan within the statutory drop and add period declared in the academic calendar. In financial terms, drop and add procedures are dealt with according to the following table and in a manner that does not conflict with the financial plans approved by the branch Rector.

Withdrawal	% of Student Reimbursed Fees	Symbol Shown in the Student's Record
Before study commencement and during drop and add period	100%	It is not shown
After drop and add period	70%	Withdrawn — W
After week 3	No reimbursement	Withdrawn — W

The student is considered deferred if he/she had withdrawn from all courses in a certain semester after getting the approval of the respective authority. It is important to mention that the students cannot withdraw after the last week of study.

For more details, please refer to the bylaw on the website under regulations section. Please refer to the related bylaw on the website (also available in the student prospectus)

<https://www.arabou.edu.kw/university/Documents/Regulations/student/en/The%20Bachelor%20Degree%20Award%20Requirements%20Bylaws.pdf>

b) Absence from Exams & Assessment

(I) MTAs:

1. A student who is absent from an MTA shall be credited with a 0 mark, unless he/she presents a compelling excuse within 1 week from the exam date via SIS.
2. If the excuse is accepted, he/she may sit for a make-up exam in the same semester at a time set by the University.

(II) Final Exams:

1. The student who is absent from a final exam shall earn a 0 mark, unless he/she submits a force majeure excuse within 1 week from the exam date via SIS.
2. In case the excuse was accepted, the letter “I²” shall be entered in the student’s academic record and he/she shall be permitted to re-sit for the exam on its first subsequent session.
3. In such a case, the course’s credit hours shall be excluded from the student’s semester and cumulative averages.
4. Should the student fail to submit the exam on its first subsequent session, the letter “I” shall be replaced with the letter F³ in his/her academic record.

c) Extenuating circumstances

During TMA submission periods or MTA or Final exam dates, it is possible for a student to be faced with unpredictable circumstances (medical, personal or family matters/issues) that are beyond his/her control. At the Arab Open University (AOU), such circumstances are referred to as extenuating (mitigating). Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Serious accident.
- Severe illness.
- Sudden onset of a mental health problem.
- A physical attack (due to a natural disaster or political turmoil).
- Severe illness or death of an immediate kin (parent, spouse or child).

Some may confuse the following circumstances as extenuating, but they are NOT extenuating according to AOU:

- Minor illness (fever, cold, coughing, etc.)
- Work-based obligation.
- Job interview.
- Social or family obligation.
- Family rituals/celebrations (wedding, rite of passage, etc.)
- Religious festival.
- Ignorance of University rules and regulations.

With effect from the academic year 2019/2020, the procedures for applying for a postponement of the exam will be carried out as follows:

1. Admission to the hospital on the day of the exam as a result of an emergency medical condition, with a detailed medical report stamped from the hospital and certified from the Medical Licensing Department.
2. Maternity (15 days after childbirth).
3. Death of a first degree relative (three days' maximum before the exam).
4. Car accidents on the same day of the exam.
5. Travelling outside Kuwait for work or accompanying a first degree relative patient.

Note:

- If an extenuating circumstance occurs, it is the student's responsibility to bring it to the attention of the concerned department alongside valid evidence that an extenuating circumstance did in fact occur. This is done by requesting a postponement of exam through an online form on the University's official website within seven calendar days of the exam dates.
- A request for exam postponement does not mean that the request has been accepted, since a special committee will examine the excuses and either approve or reject it.
- Students who are accepted to take a make-up exam will be notified on the website and LMS two weeks after the examination period. This announcement is a formal notice to the students.
- The postponed exams may not be postponed for any reason.
- Unregistered students (whose IDs begin with 9) cannot postpone the final exams for any reason.

d) Students with contradicting exams in the Final

Students who have two finals on the same day and time during the current semester are advised to take note of the following:

1. The student can choose the course he or she wants to take first.
2. The student has to appear in the room where the exam will take place and inform the proctor of the situation in order to take the necessary measures.
3. Once a student has finished the first exam, he or she may not leave the exam hall without being supervised, or else the student may not take the second exam.
4. Students can take a break for a maximum of 15 minutes between exams under supervision of a proctor.
5. Students are entitled to the full duration of both exams.

12.5 Academic Misconduct, Cheating and Plagiarism

12.5.1 Violation Definition

Any violation of the University's laws, statutes and bylaws, and any breach of proper conduct, norms and University traditions shall be deemed punishable. Examples include, but not limited to:

1. Any act that is incompatible with honour and dignity, or that which breaches good conduct inside the University.
2. Actions that result in inflicting harm to the University's properties.
3. Direct disruption of tutorials or exams, or incitement to do so. Also, refraining from performing academic and other related University activities.
4. Any attempt to leak exam questions or cover up those attempting to do so.
5. Organizing gatherings or non-academic meetings within the University without prior approval of the University's administration.
6. Distribution of leaflets, issuance of bulletins, in any form, or collecting signatures for any purpose without the approval of the University's administration.
7. Any sit-in within the University campus or participation in demonstrations or gatherings that are deemed contrary to public order or public morals in the University.
8. Any publication that offends the University's reputation or its employees, or reporting false information to the administrators of the University.
9. Assault by word or action, or both on any of the faculty members, employees, students, or guests.

10. Any impersonation of others in any matter related to the University and its affairs.
11. Carrying or using licensed or unlicensed firearms and sharp instruments

12.5.2 Penalties

If any of Article 3's listed conduct offenses take place, at least one of the following penalties shall be applied:

1. Written Notice.
2. Written Warning.
3. Final Written Warning.
4. Failure of the Course.
5. Dismissal from the University for the duration of one semester following the violation.
6. Dismissal from the University for more than one semester following the violation.
7. Final Dismissal from the University.

Any penalty imposed will be recorded in the student's file.

As per the bylaws, student may submit an appeal against the decision taken by the Disciplinary Committee or the Primary Disciplinary Council within fifteen days from the date of being informed of the decision. The decision of the Higher Disciplinary Board (Supreme Disciplinary Council) is then final and binding.

Note: The penalties inflicted should be dependent on the case at hand without abiding by the sequence listed in this article.

12.6 Cheating and Plagiarism

- A) Any student found to be committing any act of cheating or plagiarism shall be referred to ***The Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Bylaws*** at the Arab Open University.
- B) The following acts represent cases of cheating and plagiarism:
 - i. Verbatim copying of printed or Internet material, and submitting them as part of TMAs without proper academic documentation.
 - ii. Copying other students' notes or reports.
 - iii. Using paid or unpaid material prepared for the student by individuals or firms.
 - iv. The use of materials or tools that are prohibited in examinations, or attempting to do so.

12.6.1 Penalties on cheating and plagiarism

A) Plagiarism:

If plagiarism is established, the course tutor may apply the following penalties:

- 1) Deducting marks from the student's assignment according to the established respective policies.
- 2) In case of repeated plagiarism in the assignments, refer the student to the Primary Disciplinary Council to pass on the following penalties whether collectively or individually:
 - Apply the policy adopted for plagiarism in assignments.
 - Failure in the course and dismissal from the University for one semester following the semester in which the violation took place.

The Primary Disciplinary Council also has the right to recommend to the Supreme Disciplinary Council the following penalties:

1. Dismissal from the University for more than one semester following the semester in which the violation took place.
2. Final dismissal from the University.

B) Cheating on exams or violation of its regulations

If cheating is verified, the following penalties apply:

1. Grant a "0" mark for the subject matter exam whether it was a midterm or a final.
2. Failure in the respective course of study.
3. Failure in the respective course of study and dismissal from the University for one semester following the semester in which the violation took place.

In the event of repeated cheating or attempted cheating, the Primary Disciplinary Council should submit its recommendation to the Higher Disciplinary Board for the following penalties:

1. Dismissal from the University for one semester following the semester in which the violation took place.
2. Final dismissal from the University if cheating has occurred more than twice.

For more information, please see the related bylaw on the website under regulation (link below):

<http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx>

12.7 Mechanisms for provision of feedback to students

Providing students with feedback on their performance is an important part of enhancing their learning. It involves two types of assessments, formative and summative, that occur through tutorials, office hours and formal assessments. In terms of the **formative** aspect, it is a continuous process of information sharing that includes a variety of methods such as MTAs, TMAs and classroom activities (as well as quizzes) to evaluate student learning needs and progress. Students typically receive feedback through word-of-mouth or through paper view, which includes a special comment box for tutor feedback.

A **summative** assessment, on the other hand, is a measure of student learning and understanding through a formal end of semester exam (a final exam), which is designed to evaluate their comprehension of the course learning objectives. However, in some cases, the summative assessment may also take the form of a formative assessment. According to the university's bylaws, students who fail a particular course are entitled to request a final exam view, which takes place in the presence of the course tutor (and course coordinator) and the examination department; to explain the marking scheme (guideline) and highlight the areas of weaknesses. In summary, both forms of assessments are components of student advising in the sense that identify gaps in students learning to help them develop skills in the most effective ways.

12.8 Citation and Referencing regulations

Due to citation being a mandatory requirement for TMAs, students are guided on the proper referencing style through a constructive video in the LMS. They are also tested on plagiarism through a special "yes or no" test that determine their level of knowledge of plagiarised content.

12.9 Repeating Courses

A. Repeating provisions

1. Students may not retake any course in which they had obtained grade (B) or above.
2. No student is allowed to repeat a 5th (2nd) or 6th (3rd) level course derived from the Open University-UK in which he / she had obtained a C or a higher grade.

B. Repeating an optional course

- Students who had failed to pass an optional course may repeat it or any other course in order to fulfil the requirements of their programme's study plan.
 1. If they pass the course, the grade obtained in the repeated exam shall be counted in their semester average and cumulative average.
 2. If they fail the course, this shall not affect their cumulative average.

C. Repeating a compulsory course

- A student who fails to pass a compulsory course must retake the same course in a subsequent semester. The student's grade resulting from the repeat course shall be entered into his/her record.
 1. If they pass the course, the new grade will be counted in their semester and cumulative average.
 2. If they fail the course, the number of course credit hours shall be excluded from his/her cumulative average.

D. Repeating courses in order to raise the cumulative average to the required graduation minimum of 2.00 points

1. Contrary to Clause A in this Article and for raising a student's cumulative average to the required graduation limit (2.00 points), the student may retake any course in his /her study plan other than 2nd and 3rd level OU-UK courses.
2. Consonant with part 2 of Clause A of this Article, a student may retake any 2nd or 3rd level OU-UK courses provided that his grade ceiling is (C).
3. In both the above cases, the new grade is entered into the cumulative average whether it is higher or lower than the previous one, and the number of points earned prior is cancelled alongside the course's credit hours.

12.10 Student Grievance Procedures

Branch authorities look into each grievance and usually respond to the student concerned within a week. There are different types of grievances (appeals, complaints) and there are specific procedures for their submission and processing.

a) Student Appeals

An academic appeal is an appeal against an academic decision (for e.g. grades and disciplinary decisions) or a request from a student for formal review of his/her course final examination grade or course continuous assessment marks (MTA or TMA).

b) Student complaints

An academic complaint is any issue that relates to academic or non-academic aspects. It is always accessible to students and involves a direct channel of communication between them and relevant departments. The process is monitored by the Quality Assurance Unit to ensure that each question/issue raised by students is answered.

12.10.1 Procedures for Appeals and Complaints

12.10.1.1 Appeal of assessment grades

1. A student may request a grade review in any course within 7 calendar days from the date of posting the approved course results (final assessment) through the online appeals system (SIS). The student can also attach any relevant documents.
2. An automatic copy of the appeal form will be sent to the Examination Department.
3. After receiving appeals, the BEC comprising the Examination Department, the programme coordinator and two faculty members (usually a BCC and/or GCC) meet up to discuss the appeal.
4. If the appeal is valid (upheld), a copy of the BEC recommendation will be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), for approval of grade amendment. Following that, the VPAA will inform the Central Examination Committee (CEC) of the decision. Copies will also be forwarded to the AOU registrar, the Branch Admission & Registration Department, Student Affairs Office, the Programme Coordinator and the branch Quality Assurance officer.
5. Any changes in grades of a course must be approved by CEC pursuant to the recommendation of the relevant examination committee.
6. Student shall be notified of the decision within one week of the appeal's date.
7. If the student is not satisfied with the appeal decision, the student may appeal again through the SIS system one week after the decision of the initial appeal. The re-appeal is then considered at a higher level – the Faculty Examination Committee. Alternatively, if the student is not satisfied with the result of the second appeal, he/she can appeal to the Open University in the UK.

12.10.1.2 Appeals of Disciplinary Decisions

As per the Article 9 of the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Bylaws:

1. A student has the right to appeal the decision of the Primary Disciplinary Council to the Supreme Disciplinary Council within 15 days from the date of the student notification.
2. In this case, the Supreme Disciplinary Council decision shall be deemed final and not subject to appeal.

12.10.1.3 Complaints

- The student may lodge a complaint any time during the academic year through the online complaint system on SIS. In order to file a complaint, the student must choose the targeted department, state the grounds for complaint and give detailed reasons to support his or her case.
- The concerned department will examine the complaint and it may consult other members of the University staff or departments if it is deemed appropriate in particular cases.
- According to the bylaws, the complaint should be addressed at two additional higher levels - ADAA and Director Levels (final destination), whereby a proper decision and clarification is made to the student/s.
- Students will be notified of the decision via email.

12.11 Provision for students with special needs

Special needs students such as dyslexia, poor eye sight and temporary conditions (including pregnancy) are also given priority in classes and examination. If they wish to have certain arrangements during examinations such as extension of time, comfortable chair/table, larger font, etc., they should inform the Student Affairs Department at least one week before commencement of the exam. The Student Affairs will then, in consultation with the counselling office, inform the Examination Department of the necessary arrangements to be made. The branch also makes available assistants to help disabled students during examinations. Examples include:

- In case some students with special needs cannot write because of a physical disability, a person is assigned by the university to assist such students in their exams and under the supervision of the Examination Department.
- A special hall is allocated for students with health problems under the supervision of the Examinations Department.

In addition to academic arrangements, logistical arrangements also exist to help students with mobility impairments access university facilities. These include among others:

- Special parking areas.
- Special restrooms.
- Elevators to facilitate their movement.
- Wheelchair ramps distributed in all areas of the campus to enable them to move around smoothly.
- Wheel chairs (at each entrance).
- Automatic doors.

13. Dissertations and projects

The FBS program does not require a dissertation. However, student research skills are encouraged through specially designed take-home assignments known as TMAs, which require desktop research combined with textbook references to enrich their learning outcomes. The University has also provided students with an electronic library where they can browse well-known references to facilitate their work.

14. Determination of Results

14.1 Allocation of Marks

FBS courses are covered in a 16-week semester and students are required to do the following tasks:

- (i) Prepare one TMA
- (ii) Take one MTA, and
- (iii) Sit for one final exam

The following table shows the distribution of marks for the various types of course assessment in one-semester courses.

Components		Mark	Total Mark
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT	TMA	20	50
	MTA	30	
FINAL ASSESSMENT	FINAL EXAM	50	50
GRAND TOTAL		100	100

It is important to note that in cases of medicating circumstances, AOU follows contingency measures for example, during COVID-19 pandemic, AOU adapted the following methods:

- TMA: 20%
- MTA has been changed to quizzes that are worth in total 30%
- Final Exam has been changed to be Take Home Exam that worth 50%.

14.2 Endorsement of Final Results

The results are endorsed at the Branch level through the Branch Examination Committee, then at the AOU-HQ through the Course Assessment Committee (CAC), Faculty Examination Committee (FEC), and then the Central Examination Committee (CEC).

14.3 How are results communicated

Final module results are announced on the university website (<https://aou.edu.kw/>), where students can check at their results by logging into the Student Information System (SIS) with student's credentials. This link can be found under the student services menu. The following screens show the steps:

1. Login to the online Student Services with student number as a User ID and student's password and select the correct branch.
2. Once the student logs in, he/she can avail the benefits of the available services provided on the system.
3. The student will select the box titled Grades Online in the 3rd row in order to view his/her grades. By selecting Grades Online, the grades details will appear on student's screen.

Note: Grades are not confirmed until they have been approved by External Examiners and ratified at Exam Boards.

14.4 Granting the Bachelor's Degree

The bachelor's degree is granted upon completion of the following graduation requirements:

- Passing all modules required for graduation pursuant to the study plan approved for the bachelor's degree in the concerned track;
- Achieving a cumulative average of not less than 2 points;
- Not exceeding the maximum period of study;
- Finishing any other requirements stated inside or outside the study plan.

14.5 Final Grades & Semester / Cumulative Average

(i) Course final grades

Letter grades for course results carry the following points:

Letter grade	Points
A	4
B+	3.5
B	3.0
C+	2.5
C	2.0
D	1.5
F	0.0

Note: The letter grade **D** is considered as the passing grade for the individual course.

(ii) Semester and cumulative average

- The minimum cumulative average required for graduation is 2.0 points.
- Semester and cumulative averages are given in numbers (on a five-point-scale) and performance merits are assigned as in the table below.

Score	Performance Standards
3.67-4.0	Excellent
3.0 – 3.66	Very Good
2.33 – 2.99	Good
2.0 – 2.32	Pass
Less than 2.0	Weak / Poor

14.6 Award/Grades Classification

Awards

The classification of the student's certificate as derived from the OU-UK shall be as follows:

Classification, OU (UK)	AOU Rating/ Cumulative Average
First class	Excellent
Second class (1 st Division)	Very good
Second class (2 nd Division)	Good
Third class	Pass

Grades

Final grades for each course as letter grades shall correspond to the following points:

Letter Grade	Points
A	4
B+	3.5
B	3.
C+	2.5
C	2
D	1.5
F	0

Grade D is considered as the minimum passing grade for a student's successful completion of the course.

14.7 Coordinating And Monitoring Exams & TMAs

Assessment as Team Work

All forms of assessment are the result of team work, on the one hand, and are consistently and systematically monitored at various stages both at the branch level and the university level.

Exams are prepared by the Course Chair (GCC), in coordination with the tutors. After preparing the exam, the GCC sends it to an external examiner to approve it, and after that it is sent to the Dean for final approval.

At the branch level the BCC and the BPC are directly involved in the process of assessment as can be seen from the responsibility defined for each position. Similarly, External Examiners and members of Faculty Exams Committee are involved in all aspects of assessment as can be seen below:

(i) Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) Responsibilities

- Supervising tuition and presentation of relevant course material.
- Supervising and monitoring TMAs and MTAs.
- Participating in developing course content and presentation and providing the Faculty with feedback from all relevant parties.
- Training tutors and making available to them all possible opportunities conducive to professional development.
- Holding bi-weekly meetings with tutors.
- Monitoring tutorials.
- Monitoring tutor office hours.

- Giving demonstration tutorials or mini-tutorials.
- Holding training seminars for tutors.
- Participating in relevant generic and specific training workshops.
- Training tutors in monitoring and marking TMAs, MTAs, and final examinations.
- Providing semi-annual and annual reports about tutor performance as well as tutor comments and suggestions concerning both content and presentation of the course material.
- Providing ongoing as well as semi-annual and annual feedback reports about TMAs and examinations prepared by course chairs.

(ii). Branch Programme Coordinator (BPC) Responsibilities

The duties of the BPC include:

1. Coordinating with the Branch Director on the implementation and requirement of the study program;
2. Coordinating among the different course coordinators;
3. Planning and implementing Branch academic student advising and related matters;
4. Coordinating and follow up of course requirement needs:
 - Preparing the Course Calendar
 - Preparing TMAs
 - Preparing Final Examinations
5. Drawing up Samples of: (for External Examiners Evaluation): TMAs; Midterm Assessment; Final Exam Scripts;

(iii) External Examiners (EE) Responsibilities

1. Participating in the deliberations of the Course Assessment Committee and the Faculty Council Examination Committee.
2. Approving questions and marking guidelines suggested by CACs for TMAs and final examinations.
3. Reviewing and revising final examination scripts.
4. Reviewing and revising TMAs.
5. Submitting a report to the Chair of the Central Examination Committee in which he/she provides a summary of his/her ideas and comments on final examination papers, TMAs and assessment of both student and tutor performance. This includes sampling all marked assessments of AOU including MTAs and final examination papers.

15. Study regulations, policies and procedures

15.1 Attendance at Tutorials

With due regard to local accreditation conditions required from the university branch:

1. The minimum face-to-face classroom meeting hours allocated for tutorials in each course during a single semester shall be 4 classroom hours against each credit hour allotted to the course. In other words, 1 credit hour = 4 classroom hours.
2. Face-to-face tutorial classroom hours may increase in the case of certain courses having a special nature. This is determined by a competent Deanship or a branch with a view to fulfil local accreditation requirements, for instance.
3. Attending the face-to-face tutorial sessions of the registered course is mandatory by students. Absence from such tutorials may not exceed 25% of the prescribed tutorials as stated in the approved University calendar. A student whose absence exceeds this percentage fails the course.

15.2 Study Regulations

15.2.1 Duration of Study and Study Load

- i. The academic year consists of two semesters, each of which lasts for sixteen (16) weeks.
- ii. The summer session lasts for eight (8) weeks.
- iii. The University Council approves the university calendar for each academic year. The calendar includes dates for the beginning of semesters, add/drop period, final examinations, etc.
- iv. The minimum load of a regular student is eight (8) credit hours. The maximum is twenty-one (21) credit hours per semester.
- v. Students with a cumulative average of less than 2 points shall not be allowed to register for more than 12 credit hours.
- vi. The maximum period of study at the AOU is sixteen (16) semesters, equivalent to eight (8) academic years. (Summer semesters are not included.)

15.2.2 Deferral of Study

As per the bylaw, a continuing student (non-freshmen) may defer his/her study within a period not exceeding 2 weeks after semester commencement, provided that such deferral does not exceed 6 consecutive or interrupted semesters. Such deferral shall not be included within the maximum study duration limit allowed for graduation requirements completion. Deferral of studies is not permitted for new students on their first semester of study as indicated in the terms and conditions of the application form.

15.2.3 Discontinuation of Study

- A. A student is considered discontinued in a semester if he/she fails to register for any courses in that specific semester.
- B. This semester is accounted for within the allowed period of study.
- C. Students may submit a petition to the branch Rector showing proof of the force majeure¹ which prevented him/her from registering in the semester. If approved, he/she shall be deemed deferred for that semester.
- D. No student is allowed to discontinue his/her study for more than three consecutive or interrupted semesters.

15.2.4 Withdrawal from the University

A student is considered officially withdrawn from the University when he/she personally fills an application of withdrawal from the University. Fees refund policy will apply to the specific withdrawal semester according to the approved policies. For more details, please refer to article 13 in ***The Bachelor's Degree Award Requirements Bylaws at the Arab Open University*** available at the website (under regulations).

15.2.5 Granting the Bachelor's Degree

The bachelor's degree is granted after completing the following graduation requirements:

- i. Passing all courses required for graduation pursuant to the study plan approved for the bachelor's degree in the concerned programme.
- ii. Achieving a cumulative average of not less than 2 points.
- iii. Not exceeding the maximum period of study.
- iv. Finishing any other requirements stated inside or outside the study plan.
- v. The OU-validated award is classified on the basis of the student's grade point average in the best 32 credit hours at Level 2 and the best 32 credit hours at Level 3.

15.3 Study Fees

The AOU is a non-profit university and aims to keep its fee levels as low as possible, consistent with the need to offer a high quality learning experience for its students. The study fees differ depending on the nature of courses and the living standards of the country in which the university operates.

15.4 Student Transfer

In accordance with the principles and procedures approved by the University Council, a student may apply for transfer between:

- 1) Tracks
- 2) Programmes
- 3) Branches

15.4.1 Transfer between Academic Programmes

- A. The student submits a transfer application form to the University according to the instructions and procedures stipulated by the branch management, taking into consideration the following:
 1. The availability of space for an extra student in the programme, as there are limits to capacity.
 2. The student's average in the secondary school certificates should not be less than the average required by the programme to which the student is applying to transfer.
 3. Fulfilment for any other academic qualification required for admission to the new academic programme.
 4. Passing any qualifying exams requested by the programme that the student is applying to join.
 5. Ensuring that the transfer does not lead to a critical situation on the programme being transferred from.
- B. Upon formal transfer approval by the respective authority, course transfers will be dealt with adhering to Article 7, Clause B of ***The Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University.***
- C. The Branch may set any other conditions/fees provided that it is in compliance with established University procedures.
- D. The Branch may set other conditions for the fulfilment of local accreditation requirements.

15.4.2 Transfer between Branches

1. When applying for a branch transfer, the student should be fully registered in that branch, not a discontinued student, and does not have a warning/punishment of expulsion from the University
2. The student shall fill in the respective form stating the reasons for transfer before the end of the semester and according to the specified dates schedule.
3. In certain circumstances, a student may apply for transfer from one branch to another during the semester provided that he/she can provide a valid reason for the transfer.
4. The student shall pay the appropriate transfer fee when filing the application. If the application is accepted, the amount is settled equally between the original branch and the branch that the student is transferring to. However, if the application is rejected, the student has the right to receive a refund.
5. Transfer should normally occur within the same programme in which the student is registered. If not, admission to a different programme will be considered according to the fulfilment of programme admission requirements in the original branch, and then the application for transfer is reviewed.
6. Where necessary, it is the student's responsibility to get a residence permit in the country branch to which he/she wants to transfer. Including the necessary entry visas and other requirements.
7. When a transfer has been approved by the two branches, the student's file and academic record is sent to the new branch.
8. The student's grades will be transferred according to the procedures set in Article 7, Clause A of ***The Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University***.
9. Before joining the new branch, the student should be informed about any admission conditions or requirements observed in the new branch so that he/she can fulfil these conditions either before or after joining the new branch.
10. The tuition fees of the new branch will apply for the transferred student.

15.4.3 Transfer between Academic Programme Tracks

The student submits a transfer application form to the University according to the instructions and procedures stipulated by the branch management, taking into consideration the following:

1. Upon approval, the student will be formally notified by the respective authority and course transfers will be dealt with according to Article 7, Clause C of ***The Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University***.
2. The Branch may set any other conditions/fees provided that it is in compliance with established University procedures.

3. The Branch may set any other appropriate conditions to satisfy the requirements for local accreditation.

You can find the Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University in the regulations section of the website (referenced below):

<http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx>

16. Other Institutional Policies and Regulations

All relevant AOU policy applies to FBS students. You are therefore urged to familiarize yourselves with University wide policy, procedures, and regulations provided at the AOU website. These articles directly relate to all aspects regarding your programme of study, including assessment policy, appeal procedures, plagiarism, maximum allowable duration of study, transfer of credits between branches, etc. Some of the key student policies include:

16.1 Disability statement

This form is designed to elicit student disability/impairment information so that the University can make all possible provisions to help facilitate the teaching and learning requirements. All information provided here will be treated as Confidential as per the University Confidentiality policy and Equal Opportunity Policy (see the below form).



Disability
Declaration form 20.

16.2 Grounds and procedures for appeals

The University runs well-designed robust systems for processing appeals and complaints formally, to govern the quality of its provisions. Both systems are easily accessible to all students via the Student Information System (SIS). More details are available on the website under regulations (link below):

<http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx>

16.3 Equal opportunities statement

The Arab Open University was established to provide education on the basis of merit only. It observes the rights and respects the dignity of staff, students, visitors and all others with whom the University has contacts. It makes every effort to create an inclusive and diverse working, learning and social environment, free from unfair discrimination, prejudice and all forms of harassment and bullying. More details are available on the website under regulations (link below):

<http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx>

16.4 Data protection

AOU is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals by ensuring fair, responsible and transparent use of all personal information that it holds, including compliance with the safeguards of the Data Protection principles of the partner institution which defines the processing of data on identifiable living people and compliance to the Branch country regulations. This Policy and its associated Code of Practice define the minimum standards with which all AOU branches and departments would seek to comply in order to satisfy this commitment. More details are available on the website under regulations (link below):

<http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx>

16.5 Health and safety issues

The AOU strives to ensure that students have a safe, secure, healthy and confidential environment that is conducive to achieving their graduation requirements. The below policy details the framework for the implementation of the health and safety policy. More details are available on the website under regulations (link below):

<http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx>

17. Student participation and evaluation

17.1 Student feedback

Students play an important role in the evaluation, development and enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning environment. Through their feedback, the Faculty of Business Studies is able to evaluate the quality of its teaching services and learning tools. Collecting student feedback is therefore, a continuous process throughout the whole academic year. Several formal and informal methods are used to address student feedback, these include: direct contact with tutors and administrative staff, online complaints, e-mail, as well as student surveys/questionnaires placed on SIS at the end of each semester. As for the surveys, they seek feedback on tutors, modules, program delivery systems and support resources and services. They have a significant impact on the strategic planning in various areas of program delivery and designing of physical facilities for students. The survey data are processed through the branch Quality Assurance Unit in which the findings and recommendations are analysed and communicated to all key stakeholders which includes the Branch Director and the Quality Assurance Department at HQ for final submission to the OUVF.

The most significant feedback is usually discussed at the branch QA committee meetings to take proper corrective actions. Examples of actions taken during the coronavirus outbreak included substituting the virtual learning platform based on students' demand. Students are informed of the branch decisions via LMS, website and social media. The other channels of feedback offer additional opportunities for students to share their feedback on all aspects of the University. Online complaints, for example, can be accessed through the SIS and allow the user to file a complaint against the relevant department, while the email IDs of the relevant departments have been provided throughout this handbook.

As your feedback is pivotal to the planning process at FBS, we encourage you to share your candid and honest remarks, particularly on the student questionnaire. We maintain strict confidentiality and anonymity when receiving comments and responses.

17.2 Student representation on committees

Students have the opportunity to represent their interests through student councils or student committees. Student council bylaws as ratified by AOU, allow students to form branch based student councils by electing members on a democratic basis. Representatives from these student bodies are encouraged to voice student concerns and attend administrative departmental meetings. In addition to that, two students' delegates (appointed for one year in rotation) are selected to attend the University's main committees, namely the branch council and QA committee, to become partners in improving the learning experience at AOU.

Apart from committee engagement, students also participate in regular meetings with heads of academic departments to address issues, in addition to meetings with student clubs which that play an important role in student activities.

17.3 Academic and professional organizations

The AOU in Kuwait is engaged with professional organizations to enhance student learning experience. Some includes:

- a) **Knowledge Development Seminars:** The Knowledge Development Seminars is a series of developmental seminars run by experts from different disciplines from within and outside the University (including students) to discuss a number of different topics.
- b) **Job fair:** This event intends to connect students and alumni with potential employers for the purpose of promoting employment opportunities for full-time or part-time careers matching with ministry and company requirements.

- c) External engagements during new student orientation day:** To ensure maximum benefit is reaped from the orientation programme, local organizations from the private and public sectors are invited to take part in the orientation session to address students' queries. For example:
- i. Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP):** The program offers career counselling for those who seek a job in Kuwait.
 - ii. The Private Universities Council (PUC):** To address enquiries related to the University's local accreditation and governmental grants.
 - iii. International labour organization:** To guide students on choosing their career path starting from choosing the study major, as well as exposing them to the organization's valuable workshops that would benefit them during their study period.
 - iv. International organization for Migration:** To introduce students to the organization's services, including the workshops offered.
 - v. LOYAC organization:** A non-profit organization that offers internship opportunities through its voluntary developing programs for those who seek work experience at world-renowned institutions.
 - vi. The British Council in Kuwait:** To introduce training courses in terms of skills and language improvement.
- e) Programmatic accreditation with AACSB:** The Kuwait branch is constantly working to enhance the standing of the University. This was reflected in 2020, where the branch successfully earned membership in AACSB for the Business Studies faculty on January 16, 2020 and is currently in the Eligibility phase of the programmatic accreditation cycle.